

GERONTIUS NEWSLETTER No. 2

Dear Singer

This Newsletter is being sent to you because you have signed up to sing Elgar's Dream of Gerontius with the South Cotswold Big Sing Group in Gloucester Cathedral at 7pm on Saturday June 11th 2016. Rehearsals start very soon so this will bring you up to date with progress, give you information on tickets, give you directions to the venues and also remind you of various personnel, rehearsal times etc.

1. Conductor

The Conductor for the performance will be well known Kings Singer, broadcaster and conductor Brian Kay. Those who were lucky enough to attend Brian's Workshop on the work last year will know what a stimulating day he made of the study of the work and his incomparable knowledge of Elgar's writing.

2. Rehearsal Conductors

There will be a total of ten rehearsals and an all-day Workshop. Four of these rehearsals will be taken by Steven Kings, conductor of Monmouth and Thornbury Choral Societies in Alveston near Thornbury and four by Christopher Swain, conductor of Wycliffe Choral Society at Wycliffe. The all-day Workshop, an eve-of-concert rehearsal on June 10th and afternoon day-of-concert rehearsal will be taken by Brian Kay himself.

3. Orchestra

We will be accompanied by the well known Regency Sinfonia Orchestra

4. Soloists

Our soloists will be soprano Diana Moore, tenor Philip Lloyd Holtam and baritone Quentin Hayes. Philip sang in the South Cotswold Choral Group's first performance, the Verdi Requiem in Tewkesbury Abbey and will be taking the part of Gerontius.

5. The Singers

These are, of course, yourselves! So far we have 135 taking part and you are urged, wherever possible to attend as many rehearsals as possible, particularly the Workshop and the eve-of-concert rehearsal. Absolute authority rests with Brian Kay and he may ask people to stand down if he feels their performance is deleterious to the overall sound quality. The semi-chorus parts will be sung by singers from Brian Kay's Burford Singers who have performed the work several times with him before.

6. Dress on the day

For the concert we will be wearing black – dinner jackets, white shirt and black bow-tie for the men, long black skirt or trousers for the ladies with black tops and at least three-quarter length sleeves

7. The Scores

These have been distributed manually to the representatives of the four main choirs taking part, namely Stroud, Thornbury, Tyndale and Wycliffe Choral Societies. Those who do not belong to these choirs have been distributed by post. Jos will have spare scores at each rehearsal in case of problems.

Brian has sent the two rehearsal conductors the following adjustments to Elgar's original score. Please enter these in your score so that the rehearsal conductors do not have to

waste time going over them again

p. 19, bar 3 of fig 37, 'cross' - cross out the tied quaver

fig 38 - first beat - quaver

fig 41 - choir sit

p 33, bottom line, bar 2 - stand

p 41 bottom line, last bar, no breath after 'powers'

p 53 don't turn the page

end of part 1, sit on signal. No interval, just short break.

p 68, fig 29, choir stand

p 71, top line, 'aught' just a crotchet

fig 33 on word 'stand' just a quaver

p 79 - 'gave' - quaver and shouted!

p 80 - last note of the page - sops 'and' not 'to'

p 89 - bottom line, bar 5 - one in a bar

p 91 - remain standing - turn early

p 103 - top four lines - full choir 1 plus semi chorus / bottom four lines choir 2

p 104 - all altos and tenors sing choir 2

p 105 - all basses sing choir 1 for four bars then revert to choir 2

p 105 bottom line bar 4, A1 and T1 revert to choir 1

p 113 - bottom line 'God' cut off tied minim

p 124 - semi on top, choir 1 sops in the middle and choir 2 sops on the bottom

p 147 - don't turn then page

p 148 - sit after one bar

p 155 - sung sitting down

8. Basic Rehearsals

There are two venues for the basic rehearsals as follows. Rehearsals will last two hours including a juice break:-

Stonehouse Rehearsals

On May 17th, 24th, 31st and June 7th Christopher Swain will take rehearsals at Wycliffe Preparatory School Performing Arts Centre GL10 2LD at 7.30pm

To get to the venue from the M5 head for Stroud and cross five roundabouts. About 200 yards after the fifth roundabout there is an opening on the right labelled Gate 19 and a large car park. Go into the car park, park and there is a small gate in the fence. Go through this and the Performing Arts Centre is on the left after about 200 yards. Do not be diverted onto the Stroud bypass.

Coming out of Stroud follow the A419 out of Stroud along Cainscross Road. Go straight across the large roundabout at the Marling School end into Westward Road. Gate 19 is around 1.25 miles on your left. Kennedy's Garden Centre used to use the car park

Alveston Rehearsals

On May 19th, 26th, June 2nd and 9th Steven Kings will take rehearsals at Alveston Methodist Church, Alveston, BS35 3QY at 7.30pm.

*Coming out of Bristol take the A38 – after you pass the village sign saying ALVESTON St Helen's Church is on your left. Turn left immediately after St Helen's Church, Alveston Methodist Church is around 400 yards on the left on the corner of Wolfridge Ride.
Coming from the Stroud and Gloucester direction on the A38 go through the lights signed*

to Thornbury and immediately get into the right hand lane. Turn right into David's Lane, drive to the T junction at the bottom, turn left and immediately right and Alveston Methodist Church is on your left up a short slope.

9. Workshop

There will be an all day Workshop to be taken by Brian Kay on Saturday June 4th at The Marling School, Cainscross Road, Stroud GL5 4HE. This will run from 10am – 5pm. Everyone singing with us is urged to attend except in cases of absolute necessity. Tea, coffee, biscuits, squash and cake will be provided but singers will need to bring their own lunch. **If** for any reason you cannot attend please ask a fellow singer to put up a hand for you when the Deputy Concert-Manager Ian Stewart is sorting out seating arrangements. These seating arrangements will be used again at the eve of concert rehearsal and in the Cathedral.

The venue is The Marling School, Cainscross Road, Stroud GL5 4HE. The school is on the A419 close to Paganhill roundabout. If coming from the M5 follow signs to the A419 for Stroud. These lead you on to the by-pass. At the first roundabout on the bypass turn left, cross the second roundabout and turn right at the third (Paganhill) roundabout on to the A419 into Stroud. You will note a sign to The Marlings School on your left. Avoid two small entrances to school buildings on your left and take the third left (Downfield Road). We will be putting SCCG signs on both sides of this junction. Follow Downfield Road, the Music Hall is a large building on the right before the road comes to a now closed level crossing.



PARKING

There are substantial car parks, the first on the left as you drive up Downfield Road, the second on the right close to the Music Hall.

DISABLED PARKING

For those with a disabled badge park at the end of Downfield Road up by the level crossing.

10. Eve-of-concert Rehearsals

There will be an eve-of-concert rehearsal at The Marling School, Cainscross Road, Stroud GL5 4HE. (See instructions above). This will run from 7.30pm – 9.30pm and attendance is mandatory. This will be the opportunity for Brian to finalise the layout and for the Concert Manager and Assistant Concert Manager to work on plans to get on and off the stage. If for reasons of death, fire or flood you cannot possibly make this rehearsal it is absolutely essential that you advise the Concert Manager David Joyce (Tel. 01454-260542, email: davidjoyce@doctors.org.uk) and appoint someone from your voice part to reserve a space for you.

11. Concert Day

Rehearsals will start in Gloucester Cathedral at 1pm on Saturday 11th June, please be there in good time. The early start is to accommodate Evensong.

The pre-concert rehearsal timing is as follows:-

1.00pm: Part 1: Beginning to fig 40

Fig 61 to end of part one

Part 2: fig 29 - fig 101

fig 114-116

fig 125-end

3.30pm orchestral break - choir rehearses entrance and exit and then leaves

3.50pm orchestra and soloists only

fig 40-fig 61

Beginning of part 2 to fig 29

fig 101-fig114

fig 116-fig 125

Spacious changing facilities have been arranged, these include a generous area for eating sandwiches etc. We will be arranging for juice and water to be available

12. Disabled parking for the Cathedral

There are a very few disabled parking spaces in the Cathedral Close, please contact Jos if you need one.

13. General Parking

The Cathedral is very well signed with brown Tourism signs. As you turn off the inner ring road towards the Cathedral there is the very large Westgate Street open air car park on your left. To get to the cathedral from the car park come out of the main entrance and turn left. After a few hundred yards the road becomes pedestrianised, go straight on on this road and the entrance to the Cathedral is on your left. Signs will be in place to direct you to the Parliament Rooms to leave coats, bags etc.

14. Choir representatives

This event is being sponsored by four choirs from the South Cotswold Choral Group, namely Stroud, Thornbury, Tyndale and Wycliffe Choral Societies. If you are a member of one of these societies and have any queries please contact your own choir representative in the first instance as follows:-

Stroud Choral Society – Ian Stewart

Thornbury Choral Society – Alison Makepeace

Tyndale Choral Society – Catherine Bennett

Wycliffe Choral Society – Rosemary Robinson

If you are not a member of one of the four constituent societies and have any queries please contact myself, Jos Gregson (tel. 01454-411652, email jos@josgregson.plus.com)

15. Tickets

Putting on a concert of this size is a hugely expensive operation and although the costs are being most generously underwritten we do look on you, the singers, to help shift a lot of tickets. These are priced at £25 for front nave, £20 for centre nave, £15 for rear nave and £8 for aisle seats and your choir representatives have tickets in each price band. The tickets are numbered apart from the aisle seats which are unreserved.

Apart from your choir representatives tickets may be obtained from Gloucester Cathedral Box Office (tel: 0845-6521823) or from their website www.gloucestercathedral.org.uk (*Look for concerts; to book tickets online you will be directed to the 3choirs.org website*) or from the Chairman Jos Gregson (tel: 01454-411652 email jos@josgregson.plus.com)

16. Website

Our Website Manager Mike Elcock will make every effort to keep the website up to date with all the latest information and you are urged to log on to www.sccg.info to see if the information that interests you is already posted. The Newsletters will be posted on the site as they are issued so if you lose yours you can always obtain a copy.

17. Rehearsal cds and information

“Links to the rehearsal page on the Learn Choral Music website and also some YouTube performances are now on the SCCG website.”

18. Advertising

A fully illustrated programme will be produced and supplied free to every singer, every member of the orchestra and every member of the audience. We already have a number of advertisers signed up we but can always use more. If you know any firm which might be interested in advertising in the programme please contact me in the first instance.

Jos Gregson

Chairman South Cotswold Big Sing

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